

TYPES OF A NEW GIBSON GIRL

Here Are Pictures of Her, Even Though the Artist Raises the Question Whether There Ever Was Such a Thing as a Gibson Girl at All

"If I hadn't seen it in the papers I should never have known that there was such a thing as the Gibson girl."

Such a statement coming from the creator of that immortal type, Charles Dana Gibson himself, is surprising.

In view of the fact that the Gibson girl has passed into history and that a new and interesting type has supplanted her, it was the intention of the writer to ask Mr. Gibson to reveal the Gibson girl No. 2 to the public which had developed such an affection for the original type. But the question raised by the artist as to the very existence of the original crushed all hope of a satisfactory reply.

What can this surprising statement mean? Was the creation of the Gibson girl merely an unintentional accident? Did she come into being without the knowledge or in spite of her creator? Or was Mr. Gibson so upset at the time he made the statement that he hardly meant what he said to be taken literally?

The fact is that when he made the assertion the illustrator was in a nervous, disquieted mood. He walked about his studio in Carnegie Hall in agitation and in no mood for conversation.

The disturbing incident was this: When Mr. Gibson entered his studio that morning he found that the young boy whom he employs had broken into his desk and had made away with some \$10. This money represented the cash which Mr. Gibson always has on hand to pay his models.

"It isn't the money," explained the artist. "It's the terrible disappointment. The lad had been with me for nearly a month and I had come to like him and trust him. He seemed an honest, upright young fellow, and then the poor devil suddenly turns crook."

"The worst of it is he was about to be paid for the month and his salary represented more than the amount he ran away with. I'm fearfully upset. The lad comes from a very respectable family and it will be a terrible blow to them."

"No, I don't intend to prosecute him and have him punished," replied Mr. Gibson in answer to a question. "This may be just a wicked impulse for which the boy is hardly to be held responsible. Besides, if he were put in prison it might prove the end of him."

"Did you read the story called 'The First Time Man' in the *Saturday Evening Post* some time ago? That story showed how a man who commits a first offense is made into a permanent degenerate by being imprisoned instead of corrected and pardoned. I wouldn't want to have anything like that on my conscience."

And the artist rested his brush for a time and painted an impressive word picture of the incident, a picture as effective as any of his brilliant illustrations. Which shows that if fate hadn't made him an artist Mr. Gibson would no doubt have been a writer. In fact this aptitude for description or comment in the matter of the drama of life as he sees it enacted about him every day has found its way so effectively into his work as to give it depth and permanence. Mr. Gibson's pictures are not meant to please for a few moments and then be cast aside. They are usually comments on the life of the day, passing from humorous criticism to biting satire according to the subject and the mood.

It must be admitted that Mr. Gibson's representations of types of feminine beauty, notably the so-called Gibson girl, have made a deep impress on the public. At one time she dominated fashion, the stage, women's dress and men's ideals. And she is by no means forgotten at present. But there is no hope of ever getting her creator to comment on her himself, for he insistently denies that she exists.

"I hesitate to admit the existence of the Gibson girl," said Mr. Gibson, "because in all my work I have tried to avoid the creation of a single type with the ultimate and inartistic aim of exploiting her for all she was worth. I do not restrict myself to any type, though I admit that in my younger days I used one attractive model more than I would at present."

"I have hundreds of girls pose for me and I have no favorites. I look for beauty wherever I can find it, and I don't think it can be discovered concentrated in a single individual."

Certainly this point of view is well borne out in the new types that have been appearing in all of Mr. Gibson's drawings, a few of which are reproduced on this page. It is interesting to compare these girls with the original Gibson girl—the artist's denial of her existence notwithstanding—in view of the fact that the change of ideal or of ideals came into special notice soon after Mr. Gibson's return from Europe several years ago. He went abroad to study painting, with the intention, as it was then announced, of giving up illustrating in order to do more ambitious work. This trip marks a distinct epoch in the artist's work, and the present drawings show a different tendency and a stronger ambition.

The interesting question now is, Which is to be the Gibson girl II?

The picture of the heroine in "What Happened to Mary" is reproduced by courtesy of the *Ladies' World*, the others by courtesy of *McClure's Magazine*.



ANOTHER ASPIRANT TO THE TITLE.



REMINISCENT OF THE OLD GIBSON GIRL.



IS THIS THE GIBSON GIRL II?



GIBSON'S IDEA OF THE HEROINE IN "WHAT HAPPENED TO MARY."